



Dawlish Urban District.

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Sanitary Inspector,

1920.

H. B. MAPLETON, M.D., D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health.



# DAWLISH URBAN DISTRICT.

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## Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1920.

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**Physical Characters.** The town lies on the floor and slopes of a picturesque ravine, running from Haldon in an easterly direction to the sea. The central part of the valley is occupied by extensive gardens, through which runs the stream known as Dawlish Water.

The District, which has a total area of 1,500 acres, includes the village of Holcombe, pleasantly situated on the cliffs about 1½ miles to the South.

**The Population** at the last census was 4,100, but is now estimated (figures supplied by the Registrar General) at 4,427.

**Occupation.** With the exception of a Brewery there are no local industries, but employment is provided in catering for the large and increasing number of visitors who frequent the town; there are many good hotels and boarding houses. Boating and bathing facilities are excellent.

**Rateable Value.** On agricultural land, £2,168 ; on buildings, £22,443 : total, £24,611.

**Balance of Loans Outstanding,** £12,947 : 17 : 10, of which £6,040 : 10 : 0 is on account of Water Supply, ~~£533 : 15 : 0~~ for Sewerage, and £297 : 7 : 8 for Public Conveniences.

~~£3028-14-8~~

**Outdoor Relief** in 1920 amounted to £442 : 9 : 0, which is almost 2/- per head of the population, as compared with 1/5 in 1919.

**Vital Statistics.** The number of deaths registered in the District was 39, but to these must be added 2 which took place in the Union House, with 4 others “transferable.” Five which occurred among visitors are deducted. This gives a nett total of 40 (21 in males and 19 in females), equal to a general rate of 9·0 per 1000, as compared with 18·1 in 1919 and a decennial average of 15·3. There were 16 deaths in the second quarter (equal to a rate of 14·5 per 1000 per annum) and 8 in each of the other three (rate 7·2) —a rather curious combination. Thus the second quarter was responsible for two-fifths of the total mortality.

The percentage of deaths under 1 year to the total was 7·5, and of those over 65, 45·0 ; the average age at death worked out at 56·5 years. The figures of the previous year were 5·2, 53·2, and 58·8 respectively.

The infantile mortality, or deaths under 1 year to 1000 births, was 32, as against 67 in 1919 and an average of 63 for the preceding decade. The causes of infant deaths were—Premature birth, 1 ; accident, 2.

The births of 41 boys and 52 girls give an annual rate of 21·0 per 1000 ; this is more than 7 points higher than that of 1919, and is also well in advance of the decennial average (15·5). Thirty births



were registered in the first quarter, 24 in the second, 22 in the third, and 17 in the fourth, giving rates per 1000 per annum of 27·1, 21·7, 19·9, and 15·4 respectively.

The natural increase, or excess of births over deaths, was 53—or nearly 12 per 1000 of the population.

The above figures are excellent, and in many ways remarkable. The general Death Rate is considerably the best yet recorded (it was 11.5 in 1906—excluding visitors—this has hitherto been the lowest).

Again there were no deaths from any of the ordinary zymotic diseases—for the fifth year in succession, which constitutes another record. This is the more notable seeing that the periodical epidemic of measles occurred during the year.

The infant mortality was all but the lowest yet attained, and was only slightly above that of 1910 (29), while the birth rate was over 20 for the first time for five years, and is moreover the highest since 1898, when it was 23·0.

Another favorable point is the average age at death, which has of late years varied from 56 to 64, with a decennial mean of 57·8; this naturally coincides with a low infant rate and a high senile mortality.

From every point of view, in short, it has been a most healthy year, as far as Dawlish is concerned.

Turning to chief causes of fatality, tubercular disease was responsible for 5 deaths (all due to phthisis, and equal to a rate of 1·1 per 1000); this is slightly above the normal. Cancer also produced 5 deaths, with, of course, the same rate, which is also rather more than the average. Mortality from Respiratory Diseases (5) and also that from disorders of the Circulation (10) has greatly declined (from 12 and 20 respectively in the previous year); that from Violence (2) coincides with the mean.

# Comparative Table—Dawlish Urban.

DEATHS FROM	1920	Average of years 1910—1919	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915
Small pox ... ..							
Measles ... ..		·5					2
Scarlatina ... ..		·5					1
Whooping cough ..		·5					4
Typhoid, &c. ... ..							
Diphtheria ... ..							
Diarrhœa ... ..		·5					1
Total — Seven chief zymotics ... ..		2					8
Influenza ... ..		2	2	6	2	5	1
Phthisis ... ..	5	3	2	3	1	6	1
Other tubercular dis- eases ... ..		·5	1			1	2
Respiratory diseases ...	5	8	12	2	8	6	8
Circulatory diseases ...	10	10·5	20	12	10	15	11
Cancer ... ..	5	5	6	1	3	5	7
Violence ... ..	2	2	4	1	3	4	
All other diseases ...	13	27	30	31	27	17	31
Total deaths ...	40	60	77	56	54	59	69
Estimated population ...	4427	3925	4257	3747	3514	3511	3730
General death rate ...	9·0	15·3	18·1	14·9	15·4	16·8	18·5
Zymotic death rate ...	Nil	·51	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	2·1
Total births ... ..	93	63	60	48	48	51	76
Birth rate ... ..	21·0	15·5	13·5	11·4	12·2	14·5	20·4
Deaths under 1 year ...	3	4	4	2	3	2	7
,, between 1 and 5 years ... ..		2	2	1		2	7
,, over 65 years ...	18	32	41	31	38	34	29
,, under 1 year to 1000 births ...	32	63	67	42	63	39	92
Average age at death ...	56·5	57·8	58·8	62·2	64·1	60·6	50·3
<i>Transferable deaths :</i>							
In Union House belong- ing to district ...	2	3	7	5	2	1	1
In County Asylum be- longing to district ...		1		6		1	1
Others added ... ..	4	3	2	5	3	7	5
Deducted—not belong- ing to district ...	5	7	7	9	6	9	6

**Zymotic Disease.** For the fifth year in succession there were no deaths from any of the seven ordinary Zymotic Diseases, and the rate therefore is nil. The mean for the preceding ten years works out at .51 per 1000.

Notifications of Infectious Disease were 23 in number. They included 7 scarlet fever, 3 diphtheria, 5 malaria, and 8 tuberculosis.

**Measles,** which appears as an epidemic every five years with great regularity, was again prevalent during the past year—luckily in the summer months. The Infant School as usual suffered greatly, and was closed about the middle of June after the attendance had declined to 50 out of 120 on the books. The Health Visitor went to practically all the cases, and there were no deaths.

**Diphtheria.** Only three attacks were reported ; one was in January (a child of 4) ; the other two, in April (also young children about 8 years old), were possibly in association, but not conclusively so.

One was removed to the Exeter Sanatorium ; the other two were isolated at home (both lived in out-lying parts of the District). All made good recoveries.

**Scarlet Fever.** Seven cases, five of which were notified about the middle of January. Of these, four were in one house at Holcombe (one adult and three children of school age) ; the other was an infant living in Dawlish.

Two more isolated attacks came under notice (March and November)—in a young adult and a child of 5.

Four were removed to Newton Isolation Hospital and one to Exeter, the remaining two being efficiently isolated at home. There were no fatalities.



**Malaria.** Five notifications, all in adults, who contracted the disease in the East of Europe or India.

**Phthisis** was limited to four cases, two of which were in visitors ; another patient (at the time in the Cottage Hospital) was a non-resident. Two of these have since left the District ; all were adults of ages varying from 21 to 55.

Four notifications of other tubercular affections were received associated with eye, peritoneum, and spleen, while in another instance the disease was general. Two of these were visitors and no longer reside in Dawlish.

In all the above sanitary and general conditions were good.

There are (at the end of 1920) twenty tubercular patients living in Dawlish (phthisis 13).

**Influenza** was not prevalent to any extent, and there were no fatalities. Preparations were made, however, to provide assistance as far as possible with the help of Miss Hardy's Nursing Organization, which was very kindly put at my disposal, in case of another general outbreak of the disease ; the experience may be useful on some future occasion.

**Diarrhœa** was not at any time in evidence, and no deaths from this cause were registered.

**Isolation Hospital.** Two patients were sent to the Exeter Sanatorium (one each scarlet fever and diphtheria) and four (scarlet fever from Holcombe) to the Newton Isolation Hospital.

**General Hospital Accommodation.** There is a Cottage Hospital containing two small wards of four beds each and a cot ; also two private wards. A Dispensary is connected with this Institution.



**Small Pox Accommodation** is in *statu quo*, but the matter is under consideration, and the Council are making every effort to find a solution of the question.

**Midwives Act** is administered by the County Council. The services of Miss Ellis, the Health Visitor, were especially valuable during the measles outbreak.

**Sale of Foods and Drugs Act** is administered by the Police. The following samples were taken for analysis :—Coffee, 1 ; Milk (new), 7 ; and Tea, 1. All but one (milk) were found to be genuine and up to the standard ; there were no prosecutions.

I have no reason to believe that the foodstuffs supplied in Dawlish are otherwise than wholesome.

**Water Supply** is derived from a gathering ground on Haldon, from 500 to 700 feet above sea level, of about 350 acres in extent and entirely free from houses or any other source of animal pollution. This area belongs to the town, and the purity of the water—which is soft and of moorland type—is thus permanently insured.

A reduction of the quantity supplied is still necessary at night in respect of about one-third of the town. It is not so much a matter of available amount as of level and capacity of the main ; the Council have had the whole question under consideration, but it appears that any real solution would—at a period of extreme prices—mean a considerable outlay.

**Sewerage System** has been in good working order throughout the year ; no streams in this District are polluted. Water closets are general (with the exception of a few privies in the outlying cottages) and practically all are flushed.

## **Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.**

There are 13 milk-sellers, of whom 7 are cow-keepers, the number of cows being about 70. They are visited twice a year by Mr. Churchward and myself ; the dairies have been found clean and well kept and lime-washing of the shippens duly carried out. In one case—mentioned in my last Annual Report—a yard was drained and partly paved ; a long-standing defect has been thereby remedied.

**Housing.** The new building scheme is now in hand, and work on the 12 houses to be erected on the Oakhill site has been started.

In other respects the situation has not changed ; no cottages were condemned during the year, nor were any overcrowdings reported. I do not think much exists. Anything like ideal conditions will not, however, be attained till some of the older and more congested buildings disappear, leaving open spaces in their place ; in certain cases the conversion of two cottages into one, or of three into two, would effect a great improvement in the accommodation afforded. To deal radically with this old property is, however, impossible until there are a sufficient number of new houses to replace them ; it would merely mean overcrowding of the remainder and many tenants homeless. When the supply of houses is equal to the demand (plus replacement of those not up to modern standards) a move upward all along the line is the hope and expectation of all sanitary workers ; to what extent these hopes will be realised remains to be seen. In the meantime it is important that every house which is (or can be made) reasonably fit for habitation should be kept in order as a “going concern” ; repairs may be costly, but new cottages at an economic rent are at present out of reach.

At the last census there were 1,066 inhabited houses—3·8 persons per house.

The House to House Inspection was finished some time ago, and there is nothing to report on this head for the past year. I propose, however, to make another survey of working-class houses in the immediate future, and any further defects will be dealt with.

Outside the new scheme one bungalow was built and 20 plans were passed, 19 being for additions or alterations.

Estimated Population	...	...	4427
General Death Rate ...	...	...	9·0
Death Rate from Tuberculosis ...	...	...	1·1
Infantile Mortality ...	...	...	32
Number of Dwelling Houses of All Classes			1093
Number of Working Class Dwelling Houses			820
Number of New Working Class Houses Erected			None

**Scavenging.** House refuse is removed three times a week in the town, and once or twice in the outskirts, by the Council's employees. It is becoming more difficult than ever to dispose of this. I have had no complaints on this head during the past year.

**Slaughter Houses.** Four in the town and one just outside are visited from time to time by Mr. Churchward and myself. The question of a Public Abattoir has again been under consideration, but no definite result was arrived at. This matter has cropped up from time to time for many years past—indeed it was the subject of my first Special Report to the Council just 20 years ago. There are two main points involved—first, the efficient inspection of the meat, and, secondly, more or less unavoidable nuisance to the immediate neighbourhood, which is, of course, accentuated when the building is close to dwelling houses. I have had several complaints on the latter head with regard to one slaughter house in particular,



and as long as the present system obtains there is, as far as I can see, no effectual remedy.

	1914	Jan. 1920	Dec. 1920
Licensed	3	3	3
Registered	2	2	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	5	5	5

**Factories and Workshops Act.** The following 43 workshops have been inspected and found satisfactory :—

Bakers	7	Plumber	1
Bootmaker	1	Power Stations	2
Builders	9	Printers	2
Dressmakers	7	Smiths	2
Laundries	9	Tailors	3

Adoptive Acts and Regulations in Force in the District :—

Public Health Amendment Act, 1890.  
 Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.  
 Public Health Amendment Act, 1907.

Model Building By-Laws.  
 Pleasure Grounds Regulations.  
 Regulations under Dairies, &c., Order, 1899.  
 Common Lodging House Regulations.  
 Model Slaughter House Regulations.  
 Boating and Bathing Regulations.

H. B. MAPLETON, M.D.,  
 MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

# REPORT of Mr. S. F. C. CHURCHWARD,

SURVEYOR AND SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Dairies Inspected	...	...	8
Cowsheds	„	...	8
Milkshops	„	...	6
Bakehouses	„	...	7
Slaughter Houses Inspected		...	6
Laundries Inspected	...	...	9
Workshops	„	...	31
Intimation Notices Served		...	1
Houses Disinfected	...	...	27
Houses Redrained or Partly Redrained			14
Number of Water and Smoke Tests	...		71
Number of feet New Drain		...	2,134
Number of Visits	...	...	185
Number of Loads of Scavenge Collected			2,319

The Slaughter Houses, Dairies, Milkshops, Bakehouses, Laundries, Workshops, and Conveniences at Railway Station have been regularly inspected.

475 lbs. Frozen Meat have been condemned as unfit for food and destroyed.

S. F. C. CHURCHWARD.

## Meteorological Statistics.

MONTH	Max. & Min. Mean Shade Temperatures	Barometric Pressure Mean of Month	Rainfall at the Lawn	Thorns Rainfall	Wet Days	Hours of Sunshine	Sunless Days
January ...	44	30.11	5.46	4.32	19	86.85	8
February ...	47	28.85	0.74	2.01	18	68.40	11
March ...	44	29.52	3.81	2.37	14	132.85	6
April ...	47	29.29	3.91	4.62	23	147.90	8
May ...	53.5	30.00	1.55	1.73	10	234.50	—
June ...	59.5	29.75	2.02	1.87	9	233.20	—
July ...	59.5	29.92	3.04	4.88	19	174.00	3
August ...	59	29.22	1.04	1.27	4	187.95	3
September ...	58	30.12	0.64	0.68	6	154.25	4
October ...	54.5	29.88	3.03	3.66	12	99.00	7
November ...	47	30.19	1.86	2.21	10	59.25	12
December ...	40	29.22	5.76	5.60	19	58.30	9

Highest Shade Temperature	74
Lowest Shade	24
Mean Maximum	56
Mean Minimum	48
Mean Range of	8
Mean Temperature	52
Total Rainfall	(Lawn) 32.86 inches
„ „	(Thorns) 35.22 „
Wet Days	163
Total Hours of Sunshine	1636.45
Sunless Days	71
Wind Direction	E. 10 S.E. 99 S.W. 79 N.E. 39 W. 7
	S.S.E. 27 N.W. 58 N.N.W. 18 N.N.E. 7
	S.S.W. 7 S. 9 N. 5

Snow fell on the 12th, 13th, and 14th of December.

The Rainfall (at The Lawn) was nearly two inches less than that of 1919, but fractionally exceeded the average for the preceding 18 years (32.46 inches).

S. F. C. CHURCHWARD,

SURVEYOR AND SANITARY INSPECTOR.